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TOP SECRET SENSITIVE 050640Z AUG 72 [REDACTED]
FROM: AMBASSADOR BUNKER, KATHMANDU SAIGON 0127 IMMEDIATE
TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY, HENRY A. KISSINGER
REFS: A) WHS 2100 B) WHS 2101 C) SAIGON 0126

I MET WITH THIEU MORNING OF AUGUST 4 PRIOR TO DEPARTURE FOR KATHMANDU AND BRIEFED HIM ON AUGUST 1 MEETING ALONG LINES AGREED REFS B AND C.

I SAID THAT WE PRESENTED OUR NEW PROPOSALS, IN EFFECT OUR JOINT JANUARY 25 PROPOSAL WITH THE THREE MODIFICATIONS ON WHICH WE HAD MUTUALLY AGREED. THE OTHER SIDE HAD RESPONDED THAT THEY WOULD STUDY THEM BUT THAT AT FIRST CONSIDERATION THEY SEEMED TO REPRESENT ONLY A SLIGHT CHANGE FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

I SAID THAT THE OTHER SIDE THEN PRESENTED A PROPOSAL WHICH SEEMED TO INDICATE, AT LEAST IN SOME RESPECTS, CONSIDERABLE MOVEMENT AWAY FROM THEIR PREVIOUS POSITION. THEY INTIMATED A WILLINGNESS TO TALK TO THE GVN, INCLUDING THIEU HIMSELF. THEY ALSO GAVE SOME INDICATION OF COMING TO AN ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLE THAT DETAILS OF A POLITICAL SOLUTION SHOULD BE WORKED OUT BY THE VIETNAMESE. THEY CONTINUED, HOWEVER, THEIR INSISTENCE ON AN ULTIMATE AIM OF A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL CONCORD WITHOUT HIM (THIEU).

I SAID THAT YOU HOPED TO BE ABLE TO DRAW THE OTHER SIDE OUT FURTHER ON THESE POINTS AT THE NEXT MEETING WHICH HAS BEEN SET FOR AUGUST 14, AND THAT YOU BELIEVED IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF AFTER THAT MEETING YOU SHOULD COME TO SAIGON TO DISCUSS THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH HIM. THE DATES YOU HAVE IN MIND ARE AUGUST 17 AND 18.

THIEU REPLIED THAT HE THOUGHT SUCH A MEETING WOULD BE MOST USEFUL AND WELCOMED YOUR VISIT. I IMPRESSED ON HIM THE NEED FOR ABSOLUTE SECRECY CONCERNING IT.

THIEU COMMENTED THAT OUR ULTIMATE GOAL OF COURSE IS TO END THE WAR; THAT WE MUST CONTINUE TO IMPRESS ON THE OTHER SIDE THAT WE WANT TO ENGAGE IN SERIOUS TALKS; THAT WE HAVE NO DESIGNS ON THEM, NO WISH TO DESTROY THEM. IN THE MEANTIME. THE ONLY MEANS TO REACH THIS OBJECTIVE IS TO KEEP THE PRESSURE ON.

State Dept. review completed

MORI/CDF PGS 1-2 PER C03322149

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

SUBSEQUENTLY I RAISED THE ISSUE OF ARVN OPERATIONS IN MR-1, EXPLAINING OUR CONCERN THAT THE MARINE DIVISION NOT BECOME OVER-EXTENDED IN THE EFFORT TO SECURE TERRITORY IN ANTICIPATION OF A CEASE-FIRE. I SAID THAT IT WAS OUR VIEW THAT A CEASE-FIRE WAS NOT IMMINENT AND IT WAS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT THE GVN FORCES SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR ANOTHER MAJOR EFFORT BY THE ENEMY FOR WHICH THE LATTER IS OBVIOUSLY PREPARING.

THIEU REPLIED THAT HE AGREED ENTIRELY, THAT, AS I WAS AWARE, HE HAD FREQUENTLY FORECAST ANOTHER MAJOR EFFORT BY THE ENEMY TO BEGIN THIS MONTH, AND THAT IT WAS HIS INTENTION TO KEEP IN A FLEXIBLE POSITION TO MEET THE THREAT AND TO DESTROY THE ENEMY IN COUNTRY. (NOTE: THIEU HAS INSTRUCTED GENERAL VIEN TO PREPARE THE 7TH ARVN DIVISION TO MOVE TO MR 1 IF NEEDED, ALTHOUGH GENERAL WEYAND HAS SUGGESTED THAT AN EQUIVALENT FORCE COMPOSED OF RANGER GROUPS WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO MOVING THE 7TH DIVISION SO FAR FROM ITS HOME BASE. I AGREE; THE RANGERS ARE USED TO SERVING AS A MOBILE FORCE WHEREAS THE ARVN REGULAR DIVISIONS ARE NOT.)

GENERAL WEYAND THEN JOINED US FOR A VERY USEFUL REVIEW OF THE SITUATION COUNTRY-WIDE, COVERING ENEMY STRENGTH AND INTENTIONS, AND RVNAF AND ALLIED PREPARATIONS TO COUNTER ENEMY MAJOR THRUSTS. GENERAL WEYAND EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE SITUATION IN ALL CORPS AREAS WITH EXCEPTION OF MR-3 WHERE GENERAL MINH'S PERFORMANCE STILL CONTINUES TO BE UNSATISFACTORY. GENERAL WEYAND POINTED OUT THAT RVNAF EVERY WHERE WAS IN STRONG CONTACT WITH THE ENEMY EXCEPT IN MR-3 WHERE MUCH MORE CAN AND SHOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED. AS YOU KNOW GENERAL ABRAMS AND I ALSO HAD REPEATEDLY BROUGHT TO THIEU'S ATTENTION GENERAL MINH'S LACK-LUSTRE PERFORMANCE. THIEU ADMITS MINH'S CAUTIOUS NATURE BUT APPARENTLY HAS CONFIDENCE IN HIM, ESPECIALLY IN MINH'S LOYALTY, AND SO FAR HAS MADE NO MOVE TO REPLACE HIM. HE INTIMATED TO GENERAL ABRAMS AND ME A PROBLEM WAS TO FIND A SATISFACTORY REPLACEMENT.

I PLAN TO LEAVE KATHMANDU TUESDAY MORNING, 8TH, AND SHALL BE FOLLOWING UP WITH COMMENTS ON OTHER SIDE'S PROPOSALS.

WARM PERSONAL REGARDS.

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE